

Not because you're any different but because this is where she wants to be for the moment. Because she can do it, can stir this unrest, a toppler of empires. A waitress asks if you'd like another drink. When you say yes she says what about the young lady? Sure. You give the waitress ten dollars. She brings your drink, a shot for the girl in your lap, and ten cents change. Meanwhile the girl has been telling you her story, personal things, and you wonder if they're true, or which parts might be. You wonder if she has another story for the next guy, like dealing out cards, a deck for the whole bar. And you decide that it doesn't matter. For the moment she is yours, your best friend is jealous, when her shoe slips off you lean over, fetch it, slip it back on her foot, knowing that any second she could get up and disappear, so you hold her as if she were all the world's sweet lies.

MY DEATH

— after Vallejo and Justice

I will die in Ohio
in the sun and it
will be a day like
so many Ohio days,
full of the flowing
of the green-gray
river, the mowing of
little lawns, scarcely
any notice of more than
the weather. Old men
on old front porches
will mop their brows
and fret about corn,
tomatoes, carburetors,
departing skies and
coming winds. I think
it will be a Saturday,
busy with laundry hung
on clotheslines, with
chores in the garage,
trips to stores for nuts
and bolts, butter and
bread, wrapping paper
for a birthday party.
A car wash will be held
in the lot of a bank or
gas station, where a girl's

breasts get lathered and
sopped. Where will
all of this go, those eyes,
that touch, these songs
sung every day till dusk
and dark. Only the
gravedigger's whistling
lingers awhile as he
stows away his shovel
and wipes his dirty hands,
picturing a tall foaming
beer at the nearby bar
as he drives off adjusting
the rear-view mirror of his
brand-spanking-new car.

YOUR FAVORITE POEM

The first time is like a
beautiful woman suddenly
undressing just for you.
The second time is when
you're still reeling from
its being just for you.
But by the third, fourth,
or fifth time, you realize
that you aren't the first
and you won't be the last
or the one and only. So,
a year or two later you're
only phoning her now and
then, or she sends you a
postcard, from the south of
France or a small Montana
farm, depending on her
temperament. You look her
up today, and when she
undresses for you for old
times' sake, she does it
slowly, not suddenly, and
you notice a few crinkles
around her eyes, a gray hair
or two, and you think she
may have gained some weight,
but none of it looks bad
on her. And when the dress
slides off, you see she still
has the most beautiful legs.

— Alan Jeffries

Shadyside OH